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Being Prepared. Adopting a values-driven approach to digital inclusion within a volunteer organisation

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MON: Being Prepared. Adopting a values-driven approach to digital inclusion within a volunteer organisation. (Samantha Marks)

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9 February 2015

Can a 'values-based approach' to digital inclusion, offer a simple, but effective framework to help digital participation?

Volunteers in Scouting do amazing things with young people every day, and whether they are climbing a mountain or using social media they should use the values and methods of scouting to guide them.

For The Scout Association, education is about helping young people build confidence and life-long skills. This participatory approach to education means the 'digital-inclusion' of adult volunteers is less about accessibility of content and more about participation in online practices and engaging with young people in the online world. Consequently, the 'Being Prepared' project wanted to explore whether the adoption of a 'values-based approach' to digital inclusion, could offer a simple, but effective framework to help engage volunteers in discussions about digital participation.

Digital inclusion is a multi-faceted concept, and the barriers to inclusion are embedded in social, cultural, economic and technological contexts. Existing research and advice often centres on the practicalities of 'how to' go online. While this is important, addressing the social and psychological barriers that adults may have to overcome are essential and less commonplace conversations. Therefore digital inclusion should also examine the 'why' go online and the 'how to be' online.

The 'why' go online looks at how motivation and attitudes towards technology use will affect the choices made. Individuals may think the technical aspects too challenging or feel participation is irrelevant. For this reason discussions about digital inclusion should consider the 'meaningfulness' of digital participation in people's lives. Digital identity, the 'how to be' online, is about the presentation of self to others online, and the perception of self, developed through online interactions. From a practitioner perspective, digital identity is at the forefront of discussions about online safety, as individuals learn to navigate the online world. Exploring identity highlights the risks, fears and feelings connected to the sense of self and exposes individual vulnerabilities in an unknown environment. Digital inclusion needs to help individuals

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to take responsibility and make informed choices about their own digital identity, so they can take advantage of the opportunities as well as understanding the risks afforded by digital participation.

This presentation tells the story of the 'Being Prepared' project. In order to understand the context, it introduces Scouting and outlines the debates about digital inclusion and digital identity in more detail. The project takes a socio-cultural view of inclusion and identity, and proposes that digital inclusion, like education and development is constructed and defined through our interactions with others and the world around us. Therefore the existing motivations and skills of Scouting volunteers, established upon shared values, can encourage meaningful and truthful digital participation, within a framework already observed.

The presentation will conclude by presenting the project artefact; an open educational resource, which takes the form of a website. The purpose of the artefact is not to provide volunteers with the answers, but to engage them in the conversation, and to help them to take responsibility for making their own choices. Choices that are founded upon Scouting values and methods.

Extra content

The Being Prepared Project website

The website is the output of the project. It is a website for volunteers to explore the questions and research that the project has explored and is designed to prompt discussion and reflection.

The website is a work in progress, but you can watch it develop here: <http://www.im.mx/samsantics/Being-Prepared>



[Samantha Marks](#)

17:49 on 13 January 2015 (Edited 18:28 on 13 January 2015)

Personal Blog: Engaging in the project theme and topics

Throughout the project I have been blogging about its development, the research I have been exploring and some of the key questions.

Please visit my blog and explore if you would like to know more about my motivations and reflections about digital inclusion, digital identity and being a networked practitioner.

<http://sams-antics-learning.blogspot.co.uk>



[Samantha Marks](#)

17:56 on 13 January 2015 (Edited 18:29 on 13 January 2015)

Conference presentation (Spoiler alert)

I will be adding a link to the conference presentation and transcript here prior to the conference to ensure accessibility of content for all.



OU H818 'The Networked Practitioner' Online Conference 2015

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[Being Prepared Conference slides: Public version](#)

[Being Prepared Conference transcript](#)



[Samantha Marks](#)

18:19 on 13 January 2015 (Edited 12:39 on 9 February 2015)

References and Links

For references and links to resources used during this project see the 'Contribute' section below. Please feel free to post any additional references or resources you think might be useful.



[Samantha Marks](#)

20:33 on 2 February 2015

Scouting Values and Methods

An important part of my project is Scouting values and method. Please find a summary below of what these are, or watch the video in the embedded content section.

Purpose of Scouting

Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

Values of Scouting

As Scouts we are guided by these values:

Integrity: We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.

Respect: We have self-respect and respect for others.

Care: We support others and take care of the world in which we live.

Belief: We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.

Cooperation: We make a positive difference; we cooperate with others and make friends.

Scouting Method

Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:

- enjoy what they are doing and have fun;
- take part in activities indoors and outdoors;
- learn by doing;
- share in spiritual reflection;

- take responsibility and make choices;
- undertake new and challenging activities;
- make and live by their Promise.



[Samantha Marks](#)

09:29 on 6 February 2015 (Edited 09:31 on 6 February 2015)

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Embedded Content

Being Prepared Conference poster

[Being Prepared Conference poster](#)

added by [Samantha Marks](#)

Scouting fundamentals: Purpose, values and methods

[Scouting fundamentals: Purpose, values and methods](#)

added by [Samantha Marks](#)

Missed the conference? Hear a recorded version of my presentation.

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Contribute

Discussion (22)

Links (3)

Academic References (16)



[M.M](#)

4:34pm 11 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Samantha

This is very engaging. It really strikes a chord with me as I am constantly thinking about 'why' to go online with teaching and learning/classroom activity/homework and then consequently 'how' (in the most appropriate and safe way possible). I don't want to do it just to tick a box; there has to be a reason!

Hopefully your presentation will offer me more food for thought regarding my next steps online as a member of a school community and perhaps even some of what you suggest can be expanded to fit my context. Looking forward to it!



Samantha Marks

7:10pm 11 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Thanks Marese. Yes, I think 'why' has to resonate with what we do and believe. I really wanted to explore this area more, as I talk about it a lot in practice when working and training volunteers, and I wanted to get some underpinning research and theory behind it. My belief is that in all environments our values drive us, and when you want to enact change, linking back to values and using that to shape and drive your message helps. But as we have already started discussing, participating online also means understanding the risks and opportunities, and the degrees of openness. What has been particularly interesting during my research is how much fellow practitioners are interested in the psychological aspects of inclusion and identity. We focus a lot of the practicalities and often forget the other areas.



Sheila Greenwood

4:12pm 13 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Samatha - Your presentation is one that I have highlighted to watch, not least because my own two boys were in the Scouts and I do see the value in having well trained volunteers.

You state that the 'Being Prepared' project wanted to adopt a 'value based approach' for digital learning. Is that value based for the volunteer or Scout association? I can perhaps see value for both as digitally informed volunteers would enhance their own participation and give them knowledge to pass on. Typically getting people to participate digitally when they don't see a need is difficult especially for the more mature adult I find.

Engaging new digital learners through the use of a 'safe' website seems a logical step.

See you at the conference.



Samantha Marks

5:48pm 13 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Sheila. Thanks for your comments. The 'value-based' is a bit of both. The thing about Scouting, is that it isn't really just a hobby, but a set of values and approach to life. The project started by looking at the barriers to going online, but along the way it has developed. Therefore it is more about reminding volunteers that they have a set of values and approach to life that they can use to help motivate them to go online, but also to help them 'travel along the online highways'. I think the project has helped me to refine and redefine my thoughts about this. Of course they still need access and to learn the skills - but they would need to do that if they were climbing a mountain as well. It's just that online is more about developing different social skills than practical. Therefore my website (the artefact) is aimed at helping volunteers to start having those discussions so they understand it better, and reminding them that they already have a set of values and approaches that can help them as they explore new spaces, but also that they should do that together with others, so it isn't as scary.



M.M.

8:05pm 13 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Samantha

The psychology is incredible. Wouldn't a doctorate on that element be fascinating?! Any takers?



[Dave Martin](#)

1:30pm 26 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Samantha as someone who is developing online learning for volunteers (for a Credit Union) I am interested in the interplay between the practical barriers of access and skills on one side and the psychological barriers of motivation and trust on the other. I'm looking forward to learning more about overcoming these from your session, particularly the importance you give to the organisation's values.



[Samantha Marks](#)

7:43pm 26 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Dave. Thanks for your comments. I have learned in the work that I do (training volunteers particularly around safeguarding and child protection), that the best way to engage with people and to offer some motivation to take part/change, is to call on their values, but also to show them that they already have the knowledge and the skills within their grasp. They just need a little pointing in the right direction, support and courage. I have been interested in the psychological aspects to this for a while now, I think because I am fascinated by people, and because study has introduced me. I started off thinking that this project would be a 'how to' guide. But then I realised that I don't tell people what to do, I help them to make their own decisions based on what is right and safe to do. What has been really fascinating is how other practitioners I know in the field have engaged with me throughout the project and that the 'psychological' stuff probably isn't talked about in the same everyday way as access and skills. I hope that the presentation can give you cause for reflection within your own organisation.



[Hugo Teixeira](#)

11:39am 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

"...digital-inclusion' of adult volunteers is less about accessibility of content and more about participation in online practices and engaging with young people in the online world." Exactly, exactly, exactly. I can't help but draw parallels between your project and mine. I've learned that the low-residency portions of the fine arts programs I'm researching are less about technological innovation and more about engaging with a larger artistic community, with or without ICT. I hadn't considered the role an organization's values play in building inclusive online environments and might have to give some thought to that idea in the context of my project. I look forward to your presentation!



[catherine wilson](#)

5:28pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Sam,

A really great poster Sam.

It will be really interesting to move away from the concept of digital natives and digital immigrants and focus on values. This is very applicable to my setting so I look forward to hearing more. I wonder if your thoughts can be applied retrospectively to mandatory online education programmes where participation is mandatory?



[Samantha Marks](#)

5:50pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Thanks both. Hugo in regards to it being about participation, I believe this is where your community of practice comes in and yes I see the parallels, I guess Scouting is just an even larger community!. If you already do these things 'offline', then you should be able to think about how online can help maintain this. In my context it's about adults working in partnership with young people. And young people are online and need good role models and adults who they see every day to be there with them. (I get very passionate about this!). The values are an important motivational factor, but they also help to make it easier to get people involved.

Catherine, I do still cringe when I hear digital natives and immigrants, but I guess there is still something useful in highlighting the differences in approach. In training sessions I use the bbc sketch ["My blackberry is not working"](#). It puts things in another context by highlighting the silliness of tech talk. But what it really does is help adults relax a bit. When you look at some of the more successful digital inclusion projects they tend to be small local community projects, which revolve around people's passions, with the tech not at the forefront.

I should say, that I don't necessarily have the answers, but my aim is to start the discussions, after all, one of the scouting methods is to 'help individuals to make their own decisions....'.



[Alison Walker](#)

2:46pm 30 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Sam

I am really excited about the values based approach you are taking. I think your artefact will be a place where people can start to build their confidence and 'net savvy' in a safe environment and that will play such a big part in staying safe online. Interestingly one company I work with, whose employees travel away from home for a few days on a regular basis, had to implement a workshop on how to use Facebook and status updates safely as they were being burgled whilst they were away and the police linked each burglary directly back to Facebook! People can be so naive and trusting without 'being prepared'.

You are starting a great discussion to help 'individuals make their own decisions'..entirely consistent with Scouting values, looking forward to the presentation!



[Catherine Dartnall](#)

11:24am 6 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Sam

Your cloud is looking really good - lots of great content which provides useful additional context for conference attendees.

I can see how your volunteers are going to benefit from your work in this project area as it will help to understand how personal values and scouting values combine to allow an authentic online representation of themselves. Secondly the project will address any existing technological barriers to actually communicating in the online environment.

The website artefact itself will provide a useful reference point for volunteers which I'm sure will be well used. Am I also right in thinking that you will be also be able to demonstrate and use the resources you have created in your training workshops with volunteers?

It's a great project that will have a high value for many. Thanks for sharing this Sam and I'm looking forward to being there for your conference presentation after all of the hard work that you have put into this.

Catherine



[Samantha Marks](#)

12:20pm 6 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Catherine. Thanks for your comments. It has been good to use the project to think in more depth about the work I already do. I am hoping the website serves as a prototype that can be developed and rebranded through work. There are so many areas around this that can link in, including things like practical guidance for using technology or which social media are best for different tasks. Ad infinitum. Hopefully what I have completed is the 'grounding' needed to 'make sense' of why participation is important. And yes. I will be using this in training too, and hope that some of the media content that I create can be repurposed. As you can tell, this is an area I am very passionate about!



[Catherine Dartnall](#)

12:32pm 6 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

That all sounds great Sam. I can see that the website approach is really appropriate for this content as it will be easy to add to going forwards. A very productive outcome from H818 :)



[Samantha Marks](#)

1:51pm 9 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Questions and comments from the conference

I will try and pick up on all the questions and comments from the conference here. But please feel free to add some more!

Authenticity and false personae (Catherine and Richard). Yes. Authenticity when you are a 'values-based' movement is important, and it's something that we have been

exploring as networked practitioner. How much do we share. I think this links to ideas around 'customisation'. Just as in 'real-life' we conduct ourselves or dress in different ways, we do the same online. But we need to help people know 'what clothes to put on' . We take a promise as Scouts and I would hope that means something and has a value throughout our whole lives and not just when we rock up to a scouting activity. These values also help us to call out behaviour that is unacceptable or help people to understand how to do things.

What about cognitive Dissonance (mental discomfort or stress when we have conflicting values) (Question from Simon which I didn't fully understand, sorry, was not entirely sure what cog dis. was). I think this again links to the idea of 'real-life' identities, rather than creating 'multiple personalities' . I believe that my values transfer across my whole life. For those who don't then yes, it will be difficult. Some examples might be useful (from whoever asked the question). Between work and 'personal' you might find some 'dissonance', but then I might go back to the idea of degrees of openness. I would hate to think that people have to do things that are against their core values, but I understand that can happen. I am not saying that people **have** to go online, their has to be some **choice**, just as not every scout will want to climb a mountain. But our purpose encourages us to try out new things, and make some choice. If we approach going online as a positive thing and take some simple steps to help people (just as we would train, plan and coach when doing other 'outdoorsy' activities, we might engage better.

We don't always see where the boundary lies between the personal and professional (Rachel). Absolutely, Rachel. This is a tough one. When you talk to young people, they say to me that you have freedom, but with freedom comes responsibility. So if you do or say something wrong, you have to be held accountable. This is really difficult for volunteers, as for most scouting is an integral part of life. Not a job. Therefore understanding that our behaviour should be the same as it is 'offline' is important. We don't tell young people all the details of our week when we see them face to face, so it wouldn't be appropriate to do that online. This is why I think values are an important starting point. But also why talking about it needs to happen. If we don't talk about whether we have crossed the lines and blurred boundaries how will we know. The paper from Lanin is a really interesting take on this ([see my blog](#)), linked to small world ethics. I don't have the answer, but if we talk about it we can make it more transparent.

Have you had any feedback from volunteers/colleagues in the research of your website? (Catherine) Yes lots. This is an area that me and many fellow volunteers are passionate about. And lots of volunteers are already doing an amazing job at participating online. Volunteers and wider safeguarding practitioners have supported, read my blog and helped with comments about the project. It has been amazing to engage at a cross level with this. Also, I think it helps to have some research and theory too. It's telling people, 'you know what, no-one is talking about this stuff, so it's ok to be scared. but you don't need to be scared, lets talk you through it more simply'. All of my research has already fed back into the educational work I do both for my organisation and for others.

Do you think Scouting values help people in taking responsibility for 'being prepared'? (Alison) They should! At least if they get in a room with me I will probably evangelise them with my passion! It goes back to that point about thinking it's complicated or scary. If you then ask them about some of the other adventures they have been on, you can start to link the messages back. Most leaders are great at planning, risk assessing, communicating and having fun. That's the start. They still need the access and the skills, but even inner city kids go camping..... Its a different kind of adventure.

How do you cope with volunteers who are not digitally engaged? Many volunteers

are not online and don't even have an email. This is why champions come in, and maybe even young people themselves. We have done a lot of work recently, some of it with organisations like go on uk, looking at helping with basic skills. There are also more project potentially in the future. I want the motivation to come from within though. It's that 'digital choice'. If someone really doesn't want to have that adventure, then that's OK. But they shouldn't put the people off who do want to have the adventure. I asked young people about how adults could support them online, and they said 'listen to us, engage and show some interest. that way if we have a problem you can help'. Sometimes you can participate just by being understanding.

How would you use the website with the Scouts? Refer them to it? (Oliver) There's a lot of different ways to use it. I would see it more as a microsite, we could link to it, use it as education, and take bits from it for training face to face. I also think it would help the 350 volunteer trainers I support who deliver messages about online safety to upskill themselves. But parts of it could be used by other organisations to think about the discussions more widely. A well known e-safety practitioner said to me that the psychological stuff is interesting as we don't really talk about it. They are harder discussions to have. As we update core training modules we also hope that we can integrate messages. And one of our strategic approaches is 'digital', so we need to be having these conversations. And again, many volunteers are already living the adventure.

(Phillipa) **noted that many of the trustees she worked with didn't even have email, and viewed technology with suspicion, seeing it in opposition to the outdoors.....** indeed, And this is why challenging and reminding people of scouting values is important. The outdoors is a big part of Scouting activity, but the purpose of scouting is to teach confidence and help young people participate in the world. They don't have to be in opposition. There is a bit about reminding people that young people take centre stage..... a huge amount of scout HQs now have wi-fi....

The website will help build confidence... (Louise)... I hope so, but not alone. They still need support and skills and others need to promote these messages. Scouting is about doing things you haven't tried before. you are allowed to be a bit afraid, but there are others who will hold your hand.

Is there a social engagement badge....(Lousie)....well LOusie, adults don't get badge as it's all about the young people...but we are about to introduce digital badges for our 18 - 25year olds and hopefully working with external partners around young people and adults being online together.

There's an argument for 'training wheels', closed, supportive site to develop skills (Guy) - Absolutely, I agree. This is one of those times though, when local smaller support is more effective than national Headquarters trying to do something. You need to do that in your communities, where you are supported by people you know, face to face in the first instance. If people are scared about going online, then their first trip shouldn't be with someone they don't know.

I have been having a great deal of fun as well as development through this project, and I am sure my passion came through! If you have any more questions let me know. Remember, it's all about the journey... there doesn't necessarily need to be an end.....



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

2:26pm 10 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Your comments and questions from your live presentation:

- Motivation is interesting.
- trust aspect very present in Germany.
- Digital is not unique in having inclusion issues - shy students or those who need time to compose answers hate F2F tutorials
- I think there is a lot "why would it be valuable"
- Authenticity is interesting
- And the creation of false personae
- we don't always see where the boundaries lie between our personal and professional identities
- And that may be changing...
- Have you had any feedback so far from volunteers/colleagues in respect of your website?
- Excellent presentation lots of info to digest but clear message about the importance of being digital
- Do you think scouting values help in people taking responsibility for 'being prepared'? Great web site too!
- how do you cope with volunteers who are not digitally engaged. Many key volunteers and gatekeepers are not online many don't even have email
- can you tell me how you would propose to use the website with scouts? Refer them to it?
- I was a trustee for local scout group for 8 years. Other trustees wouldn't even have an email account until very recently
- I think Sam's website is going to help those people. Maybe their starting point to build confidence?
- sending a positive message of inclusion
- I wonder if there is a social engagement badge in scouts!
- There could be an argument for "training wheels" i.e. a closed, supportive site to develop confidence for new online users



[Samantha Marks](#)

10:08am 13 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Picking up on some of the comments that I missed.....

Motivation. Yes it is really interesting. One of the social workers I know from twitter (I have also met him in real life) introduced me to [motivational interviewing](#), which I found really interesting. But basically like all motivation theory stuff, it centres around individual choice. They have to recognise what's important for them, but you can help them to have the conversations. This links to the comments about there being lots **about the why it would be valuable**. In some of the people I engaged with about digital inclusion projects, they said that the problem was that many of the bigger projects focus on technology or the 'grand scheme' whereas the ones that work are the ones that are personally and small and simple, and where technology is just the enabler. I guess this area fascinates me because

education is all about motivation and 'persuading' people to adopt the things you are saying.

Digital is not unique for inclusion...you are right, and I think that was also highlighted by some of the other presentations. I have learnt a lot over the years about designing learning activities in the face to face environment that allow for different people to have opportunities. Even simple things like saying...you don't need to write this down as I will send you the slides...well for some people the act of writing helps. I have created learning logs and sometimes we have activities where we don't feed back as a whole, so that people don't get embarrassed.

The inclusion and social networking is a big barrier. We have to be careful that online isn't the only way we do things, or that we don't make assumptions. A good example is leaders saying that they are going to use facebook for all communications to teenagers. But theres one person who doesn't use facebook because they have had bad experiences. We need to make sure that the quietest voices are heard and that we have addressed all concerns.

However, despite my digital inclusion stance, I also think that if someone really doesn't want to go online, then that's OK. There are some people who don't want to climb mountains. We need to respect that choice, but just make sure that that choice is an educated one.

Lots to digest. Yes. Sorry about that. I did say that I could talk for days on it. I hope that I have tried to consolidate what I think are the key messages. I have been thinking about this topic a lot of the last three years, so I hope that has helped to focus the project. Remember it the discussion (or the journey) that's important rather than the destination. However, interestingly, this 'values' approach is one that we are looking at in some of the wider work I do outside of my job. For faith based groups for example, they are really keen to focus on positive methods of encouragement rather than the scare stories.

Positive messages - thats me. My grandfather and my father instilled this positivity in me. You can't help and develop people by being negative and there's always a way around a problem. I think we can tackle the difficult subjects as well as the easy ones if we inject a bit of positivity. People will listen to you more and its a more pragmatic approach. I think the online world is amazing, and I think young people are, and scouting volunteers are incredible. A positive realist! But it does come back to role modelling.

Post project. This week I have already had several discussion with people about where to go next with this, and also been invited to sit on working groups for those who are developing online interactions within scouting. As it was also safer internet day, all these things have given weight to my approach and thoughts. So watched this space as there will be soem more scouting education and action around digital inclusion.....



P Seaward

5:27pm 17 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Sam, I like the values based approach in the Scouting movement, and I believe it is something other institutions could learn a lot from.

I heard your presentation, and I'm sure your enthusiasm carries a lot of influence in coverting people to an open mind. I know volunteers can be fixed in their views, so you have a tough task to do!



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

8:15pm 18 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Many Congratulations! Your presentation has been voted by delegates to be one of the most effective of the H818 Online Conference 2015 and you are officially one of our five H818 Presentation Star Open Badge Winners! Please see how to Apply for your Badge here: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/badge/view/33>

Well done!

Simon

H818 Conference Organiser



[Samantha Marks](#)

8:45pm 18 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Wow! Thanks all for your votes. My first badge!

It was a joy to present and share my passion. Sam



[M M](#)

2:01pm 19 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Samatha!

Congratulations! Would I be able to use some of your comments for EMA? I am reviewing your presentation and hope that is OK?



[Samantha Marks](#)

9:09am 20 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Of course. you can use whatever you need. Sam

Contribute to the discussion

Please [log in](#) to post a comment. [Register here](#) if you haven't signed up yet.